

# The Defender

THE VOICE OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



Students line up outside the Bergeron Wellness Center on Nov. 8 to receive rapid COVID-19 tests following the recent outbreak.

PHOTO BY CHARLES WILSON

## Rise in COVID-19 cases allegedly point to Halloween weekend gatherings

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St. Michael's College reported a spike of 87 positive COVID-19 cases within the past week, which is the highest uptick the institution experienced since last spring. President Lorraine Sterritt informed the College of the outbreak in a series of emails from Nov. 3-9 and alleged that Halloween weekend activities served as probable cause.

"We were doing really well as a community up to the point where there were numerous Halloween parties where students were unmasked and in close contact," Sterritt wrote in a campus-wide email on Nov. 7. "We are deeply saddened that the investigation of the genesis of this increase in positive cases points to Halloween parties as being a significant part of the problem."

In-person classes were suspended last Friday resulting from the outbreak and resumed on Monday at instructor discretion. Sterritt also announced that in-person student social gatherings have been suspended, and that party registration would be reevaluated after Thanksgiving break. **see COVID pg. 2**



# DEFENDER NEWS

NOVEMBER 12, 2021

## COVID

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I can see and hear the impact that this difficult week has had on our community. I'm feeling grateful to our students, faculty, and staff for responding quickly and adjusting, and for adhering to COVID policies. I recognize the sacrifices and stresses involved, and I feel for everyone as we navigate our way through this wretched pandemic. I want our students to have fun, and I want them to be safe. We are a strong community. We will pull through this, and we look forward to brighter days ahead," Sterritt said in an email to the Defender.

Following the outbreak, Sterritt announced that there would be an asymptomatic testing center in response to the rise in cases. Dawn Ellinwood, vice president for student affairs, informed the College that the center would be located in Eddie's Lounge.

The outbreak made national headlines and was reported by The New York Times on Tuesday. The story was temporarily featured on the landing page of their web site and was later migrated to the COVID-19 updates section.

On Wednesday, the Student Government Association executive board responded to the email from Nov. 7 with a statement on behalf of students and their concerns.

"First and foremost, masking at social gatherings in a student's living space has been communicated to students as only being needed at their discretion. This guidance was given at a residence hall meeting for townhouses, apartments, and suites by the Director of Residence Life. The College now asserting the guideline has always been proper masking indoors is still required, even in social gatherings with people you know presents a contradiction of what students were told earlier in the year. It has created a sense of frustration, as students who have had small, safe social gatherings within the guidance they were given are now being seen as reckless and unsafe. Further, as students' homes are considered a private space on campus, this guideline may ultimately prove to be unenforceable without further restricting a student's ability to live comfortably on this campus," the board wrote.

Marketing and Communications Director Alex Bertoni said he felt sad and proud in an email to the Defender. "I am sad because despite so many students doing the right

thing, we have this situation. I feel proud because of the students, faculty, and staff that have come together to help out," he said.

Political Science and International Relations Professor Mike Bosia expressed his perspective as to how state policies may have played a role in this outbreak.

"We are in this position because the governor has been unable to explain why Vermont is experiencing a surge in COVID infections, hospitalizations, and deaths since August – some of the highest numbers since March 2020... St. Mike's is part of the larger community, and when public health authorities allow you to go to bars and clubs unvaccinated and without a mask, we can predict that there will be an outbreak," he said.

Bosia also believes that the governor is "relying on our impatience instead of our best selves."

Robert McCabe '23, explained his frustration about the suspension of social gatherings. "One of the main things students have to look away to is seeing our friends and going to social gatherings, and this gives us a way to get away from the stresses of COVID and school. COVID fatigue is adding up, and we need a way to escape."

Gabby Doe '23 believes that engaging in off campus activities could have contributed to the outbreak. "It seemed like we were doing a pretty good job at containing them, but the spike from Halloween weekend made sense because a lot of people were going to other schools or bars to party. And that's just introducing COVID from somewhere else into our environment. There's nothing they could do to prevent that... They can't force us to stay on campus," she said.

Sterritt expressed her desire for students to enjoy the college experience, though the spike has heightened a need for an increase in precautionary measures.

"I know you want to enjoy your St. Michael's experience to the fullest, but this spike in cases, the onset of winter, and the power of this virus call for even more thoughtful consideration and personal responsibility," Sterritt said in an email. She called upon students to join a collective effort to "do well and do good."

Sterritt also added that no student experienced symptoms that required hospitalization.

On Nov. 5, Sterritt informed the College community about 54 re-

ported cases and that the Executive Policy Group would meet to assess the status of campus.

"I can't emphasize enough the crucial importance of abiding by the College's COVID policies. There are vulnerable people on campus and vulnerable family members in the homes of faculty and staff. It is imperative that everyone make wise choices, choices that take into account the wellbeing of every member of our community," she wrote in an email on Nov. 5.

Faith Morgan '23 said she felt confused and scared about how the remainder of the semester would pan out after seeing the first two emails.

"I remember seeing the first email about the 10 cases, and I was a little anxious about that, but then I was also kind of okay, because 10 is still pretty low, given that we're all vaccinated," she said.

"Then we got the email about 31 more cases. With this one, I felt a lot more anxious and I felt like my mind was all over the place. I would have moments where I'd be super anxious, but then I'd tell myself well we're doing what we can. This spike is kind of inevitable, it was going to happen at some point."

COVID-19 cases have increased in Vermont since this summer. The Vermont Department of Health reported that the highest number of daily cases throughout most of the summer was 59, until a recent spike in August led to over 100 reported cases per day.

Months later, the state is experiencing a spike as daily cases reach the highest they have ever been at 591 cases yesterday.

Gov. Scott said in a press conference on Nov. 4 that this pandemic is "driven by the unvaccinated."

Sterritt announced last week that boosters would be required for vaccinated students, faculty and staff.

"The vaccine is an incredibly effective tool – the most effective tool – we have. It's greatest strength is in reducing severe illness requiring hospitalizations and reducing deaths," said Trish Siplon, public health director and political science professor.

Bertoni, who also serves as a member of the Executive Policy Group, explained that the deadline to receive boosters is undecided.

"The booster shot is required for students as they become eligible, but a deadline has not yet been estab-

lished because it varies from student to student," Bertoni said. "We will provide ample time for students to get their boosters. We just ask that students schedule their booster as they become eligible, which is six months after receiving their second Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or two months after receiving the Johnson & Johnson vaccine."

Vermonters who expect to receive a COVID-19 booster can select a different vaccine brand than their initial shot.

The FDA and CDC announced the approval of vaccines to children ages 5-11 on Oct. 29.

"Thankfully, 44,000 more Vermonters [children ages 5-11] just became eligible for vaccination. Today's data underscores the urgency for parents and caregivers to sign their children up to be vaccinated if they are eligible. Vaccines are safe, effective and free. Not only will they limit spread of the virus, but also limit disruptions, like the need to quarantine after exposure, which leads to kids missing school and other activities that help their social and emotional wellbeing," Scott said in his Nov. 4 press conference.

As some community members live with unvaccinated children, this can mitigate potential fears of bringing the virus home.

When discussing to the safety of the College community, Sterritt added that "With regard to the current increase in cases, it is absolutely imperative that everyone follow the College's COVID policies. Everyone must remember that there are vulnerable people on campus and that there are faculty and staff who have unvaccinated children and other vulnerable people at home."

Though the St. Michael's community has been rattled by the outbreak, Bertoni is hopeful that our community will overcome this.

To register for a booster or to check for eligibility, visit the Vermont Department of Health website.

Asymptomatic faculty, staff and students can schedule a COVID-19 test through the Sign-Up Genius linked in a Nov. 9 email from the Office of Student Life.

Symptomatic students can call or visit the Bergeron Wellness Center to receive a test.

*Ashley DeLeon contributed to the reporting of this story.*



# Isolated campus sights and scenes



PHOTO BY KAEA MACLAUGHLIN

The stage set for “Dancing at Lughnasa” sits in the empty McCarthy Recital Hall on Nov. 11.



The Alliot dining hall is filled with empty chairs at dinner time on the evening of Nov. 6.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY DELEON

Outside of the Dion Student Center is unoccupied by community members on Nov. 6.



Bags of sandwiches are prepared for meal delivery on Nov. 6.



Dinners are delivered to students in Joyce and Ryan Hall on the evening of Nov. 6.



Warm containers of food are rested on top of a meal delivery cart on the evening of Nov. 6.



# New major embraces equity

## Equity Studies coming fall semester 2022

By Lochlan Sheridan

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The decision to add an Equity Studies major was announced by the Saint Michaels Board of Trustees on Oct. 22. This announcement comes as the first semester winds down and students begin to prepare for finals and search the spring catalog of available classes. While the Equity Studies (EQ) program will not be implemented until the 2022-2023 academic year, interested students can begin to take spring semester courses focused on equity, race, and disability that will set them up for the major's future requirements.

Katherine Kirby, philosophy professor and director of Global Studies, worked with a group of 10 other faculty members to develop the Equity Studies proposal during the 2021 spring semester.

"We recognized a need—and a desire on part of the students—for a course of study on race and additional curricular opportunities on disability," Kirby said in an email. This decision to add the new area of study comes to St. Michael's at a time when racial discrimination and social injustice are talked about at high

magnitudes throughout the U.S.

In Vermont specifically, racial inequality and the marginalization of certain people have become growing problems that affect minority groups throughout the state. Because of the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, minorities are still struggling to find decent-paying jobs and affordable housing. The fight for equality and racial justice is being pushed by certain legislative powers such as Sen. Kesha Ram, state representative for Vermont's Chittenden County.

"It's valuable to be versatile in your understanding of other communities, cultures and lived experiences," Ram said. "Moving into a space where you're really understanding and celebrating differences is critical for the job market and setting you up with a lifetime of enrichment and happiness."

Ram also explained the significance of critical race theory and why she believes it is an important concept within the EQ major curriculum. "We should be trying to create debate and the spirit that everyone can talk about different thoughts and ideas without it getting personal," Ram said.

Critical race theory is a highly debated topic, focused on the idea that racism is not only developed from

personal bias or prejudice, but also through the legal systems and public policies that have shaped U.S. society. While some opposers feel that the theory is aimed to achieve racial equity through the discrimination of white individuals who have been the majority throughout the history of U.S. government, others such as Ram, believe that critical race theory is an essential concept for all college level students to understand and acknowledge.

Aspiring students interested in the EQ major will have the opportunity to become more diverse in their understanding of different cultures and communities they don't personally associate with. Through a series of electives and core classes, the EQ major provides an inside look into the disparities that many minorities face throughout the U.S.

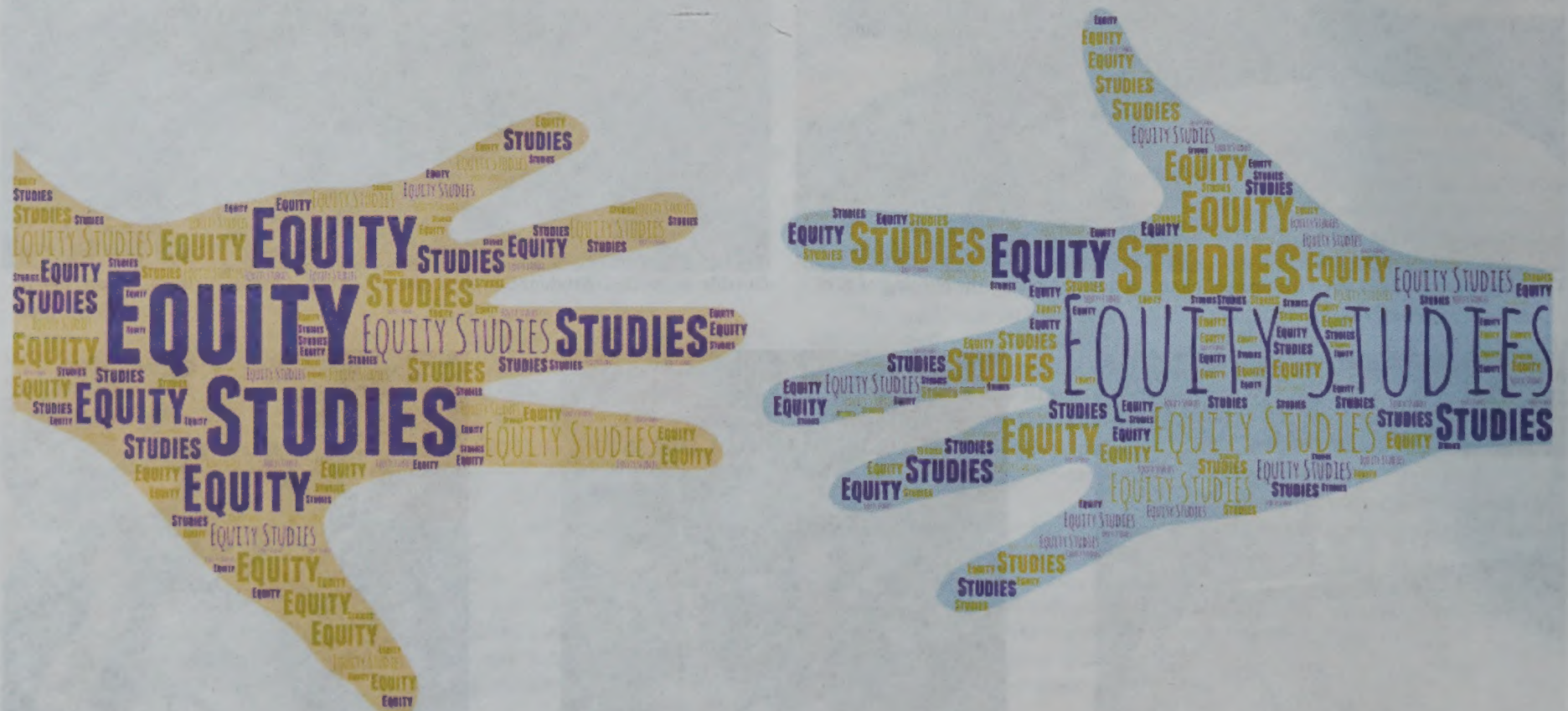
While new classes related to race and disability are still being created for the EQ major, professors have a strong understanding of what the curriculum looks like for the up and coming program. "Students will take courses that explore how our society creates and perpetuates domination, oppression, marginalization and inequity in regard to race and ethnicity, disability, gender, sexuality and class," Kirby said in an email.

Examples of EQ classes being offered in 2022-2023 are Seeing & Transforming the Systems & Structures of Society, Seeing & Transforming the Self, and Competencies & Skills. The major will also give students the option of concentrating in a specific track such as Race & Ethnicity, or Disability.

Along with the continued development of future classes, Kirby explained how the group who worked on the EQ proposal, feels that the addition of this major provides a perfect opportunity for the college to hire more BIPOC (black, indigenous, and people of color) faculty members.

President Lorraine Sterritt, who was also involved in the Equity Studies proposal, emphasizes the need for more curriculum surrounding this topic of study.

"It brings attention to very important issues of diversity and equity which fit with the ethos of our college and are very much a topic at large" Sterritt said in an email. "I believe the EQ major will attract students who are interested in delving into topics of equity."





# The Career Symposium

## Alumni connect with future grads virtually



PHOTO BY JACOB PELLETIER '14

Clockwise from top left: CeCe Horbat, host of the Environment and Sustainability panel, Jack Loomis, Caitlin Shea-Valentine, Chris Furlong as panelists on Nov. 2, 7:00 pm.

### Kaela MacLaughlin

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The annual Career Symposium at St. Michael's College is running from Oct. 26-Nov. 17. It is a virtual event consisting of a series of webinars. Students can dial into fourteen different panels and speak with alumni from different fields. Panel topics include accounting, the arts and sustainability.

Ingrid Peterson, director of the Career Education Center, helps students with job searches, graduate school applications and academic major advising.

The Alumni Board of Directors is run by former graduates of the College. According to Peterson, they select speakers for the annual Career Symposium. Angie Armour, director of Alumni and Family Engagement, explained that the first symposium ran in 2008, and is currently going fourteen years strong. Both 2020 and 2021, were held virtually, she said.

Renée Davitt, coordinator

of on-campus student employment, moderated student questions and invited three alumni panelists. Her panel is scheduled for next Wednesday.

Davitt is an alumna from the class of 1986, and first worked with the Career Education Center as an unpaid volunteer until she was offered a full-time job.

Josh Bardier '10, is on the arts and entertainment panel scheduled for Nov. 17 at 6:00 p.m. This panel will be hosted by Heather Fichthorn '12. The two were in contact with each other already before he was offered a spot on the panel. He currently lives in New York City as an actor, singer, writer and director.

"I'm going to try to tell ten years ago Josh what I would have liked to have known," Bardier said. He explained that his reason for returning was because of his love for Saint Mike's and its community spirit.

Caiti Zeytoonian '14, was in the Law and Government panel on Nov. 2. She said that participating as a panelist was an opportunity to guide students who wished to pursue law. She

said she liked the faculty and courses at St. Michael's. She currently works at the Morgan Lewis law firm in Boston.

Margaret Wilk '24 said she attended the symposium. "It's good to make connections, so that's what I took away from that," she said.

The Technology and education panels are taking place on Nov. 16 at 6 and 7 pm respectively. Arts and entertainment and exploratory are the final panels open for students. They are taking place on Nov. 17 at 6 and 7 pm. The registration link is as follows: <https://www.smcvt.edu/outcomes/alumni/calendar/career-symposium/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

November 16th, Tues:

6:00 pm - Technology  
7:00 pm - Education

November 17th, Weds:

6:00 pm - Arts and Entertainment  
7:00 pm - Exploratory

Registration Link:

<https://www.smcvt.edu/outcomes/alumni/calendar/career-symposium/>



# Study abroad opportunities available despite COVID-19



Abby Poisson '22 on a study abroad trip in Nepal.

By Kevin Corcoran

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With more than 100 programs around the world to choose from, The St. Michael's College study abroad program has provided students the ability to travel the globe and explore new academic experiences. With five types of programs: intensive language, university liberal studies, community-engaged learning, international internships, and field-based research, students at St. Michael's College have been able to simultaneously further their education, while also immersing themselves in unique cultures. However, like many aspects of life at Saint Michael's, the Study Abroad Program has been deeply affected by COVID-19.

Before the Pandemic changed school and home life for St. Michael's students, the study abroad program for the Spring of 2020 had an 88% acceptance rate, receiving 67 applications with 57 students being accepted.

However as travel bans, mask mandates, and quarantine orders began to increase, St. Michael's ability to accept applicants decreased.

In the fall of 2020, applicant numbers fell by 46% and only one of 31 students that applied was actually able to go on a trip. The spring of 2021 saw another decrease in

applicants by 48%, but this time 4 of the 15 students who applied were accepted. The fall of 2021 saw 10 students applying and 4 students again being accepted. Looking ahead to the spring of 2022, 38 students have applied and 29 have been accepted as of November 1st.

Ellen McKenna was one of four students to participate in the study abroad program in the spring of 2021. She studied in Seville, Spain. As a Spanish and MJD double major, McKenna chose to study in Spain so that she could immerse herself in the culture and language to hone her skills. "My experience was absolutely incredible," McKenna said. "I became such good friends with my host siblings and their friends, and I would spend time daily with my parents," said McKenna. "All of my university classes were in person, and I also worked as an English assistant teacher every Monday in a 4th grade classroom, delivering lessons in English and helping the young students with their grammar and pronunciation skills of a second language," said McKenna.

While she was not able to travel as much as she initially would have liked, McKenna grew to call Seville and the city home, even becoming a local and a "regular" at her favorite cafe and wine shops.

Though COVID did restrict aspects of the study abroad program, when asked if she would recommend the program to other students,

Ellen enthusiastically said "Yes! Absolutely. It was a blast, API did such a great job making us Americans feel at home, and the experience of living independently and under another family roof for four months is simply irreplaceable."

Abby Poisson, '22 is currently studying in Kathmandu, Nepal this semester. "Studying abroad during the pandemic has certainly changed the trajectory of my experience in some ways, but less so in others," Poisson said. "I have been fortunate enough to be able to stay with a homestay family in Kathmandu, as planned, which has made all the difference in my cultural and language-based immersion. Understandably many of my interactions with local people have had to be limited due to the risk of transmission of COVID."

While Poisson's experience with COVID in Nepal has provided some limitations to the experience, she is grateful for the opportunity to travel. "Kathmandu has a mask mandate both inside and outside, so all of the students, as well as most local Nepalis, wear masks everywhere. I am incredibly grateful to be here, regardless of the restrictions and limitations that COVID has set into place, for our health and well-being."

Poisson also has advice for students considering participating in the study abroad program for one of their semesters.

"I know that traveling during

COVID can be anxiety-inducing for many and that there are inevitable risks involved, though they vary based on the country," Poisson said. "As long as students exercise caution abroad regarding Covid, as they do in the U.S. and in our campus community, study abroad can be and still is a fulfilling and exciting experience."

Director of the Study Abroad Program, Peggy Imai, has continuously been overseeing the study abroad process on campus amidst the COVID pandemic.

"There are some schools that have found a pent up demand in study abroad because so many students for so long have not been able to go," Imai said. "However, that's not what's happening on this campus. You have a lot of students that come here to have a community. I've had several sophomore students tell me that they would like to go abroad but what's more important to them is to make friends and establish the relationships they would have made in their first year".

A recent survey conducted by the Study Abroad Office found that many students still wished to travel abroad but simply haven't made it to the office to discuss opportunities. Imai said "This makes some sense because students have other things on their mind such as making friends and class and our application deadlines aren't until a little bit later in the semester, but it would be better for some students to come in earlier to begin planning, especially students who are required to study abroad to complete their majors."

Imai said she wants students to understand that the opportunity to study abroad still exists. "We haven't closed our doors or anything like that. Being able to experience different things is so important. If a student is for any reason not able to go abroad, I hope they don't stop having experiences that are unique and challenging to them here at St. Mikes."

If you wish to be a part of next semester's study abroad programs you can find additional information and the necessary forms on the Study Abroad page on the official St. Michael's website under the academics tab or type in the link: <https://www.smcvt.edu/academics/study-abroad/>

The current deadline for the next set of trips is February 22, 2022.

PHOTO BY ZORA DUNCAN



# Weekend highlights

## Alternatives to the partying kind of fun

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Clockwise from top left: John Cunningham (rightmost) and David Raymond (second from left) discuss the Friday Knight Dry high stakes bingo game that took place in Alliot on 9/29; the game was hosted by Father Michael Carter. Freshman Will Gianni partakes in the Friday Knight Dry festivities by carving himself a pumpkin in Dion on 9/29. Senior Baker Hurley from Turtle Underground performs during the opening Friday Knight Dry activities on 10/29. Pumpkin carving and the haunted house started the evening off in Dion, and then moved to Alliot at 9:30.

PHOTOS BY MATT GIANNI



By Sam Mercer  
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Phil Gadzekpo sits in his office in St. Edmund's 115, he works diligently on two desktop computer monitors while simultaneously live streaming world news on a laptop next to them. The shelves behind his desk are adorned with sculptures and art pieces from several different continents. A chalk board mounted on his wall is scribbled with every possible academic opportunity for an international graduate student at St. Michael's College.

An assortment of bagged snacks are arranged next to a Costco coffee maker on the table by the door for the enjoyment of his visitors, who pop in frequently.

"Almost every day, students come here, get a snack, sit down, chat for a few minutes, and just do the assignments and things like that, and then go to class," Gadzekpo said.

As the new director of the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), Gadzekpo has numerous responsibilities. He provides support to both undergraduate and graduate international students, ranging from guidance with visa applications to weekly trips to the grocery store.

Originally from Ghana, Gadzekpo has worked in the field of international education for nearly a decade. In 2012, he earned a bachelor's degree in early childhood education from the University of Cape Coast in Ghana, and went on to work in their Center for International Education.

"My first task was to work with students from the University of Wisconsin," he said. "They had a project in Ghana, so I was part of the welcome team. So we worked with them, and that kind of aroused my interest [in international education]"

Gadzekpo came to the United States in 2015 to earn a master's degree in early childhood education from East Tennessee State University, he worked simultaneously in their Office of International Programs. In 2018, he started work on his doctorate of higher education from Appalachian State University in North Carolina, a process that remains ongoing.

Gadzekpo then moved to Washington State in March, 2020 and worked as an international admissions coordinator for Washington State University for a year, before he discovered the open position at St. Michael's College.

"I was going through this [website] and I saw the position at St. Michael's College, and I Googled it. And I was like, well, it's very interesting," Gadzekpo said. "I did a lot of research on St. Mike's. And I thought it was great. I liked the fact that they support social justice. They had a lot of programs and activities and events supporting minorities."

Gadzekpo was hired in July as the director of the OISS, which is part of a broader effort to bolster the College's appeal to international students. The OISS is overseen by the newly minted Center for Global Engagement (CGE), which opened in July. The CGE coordinates all international activity for the college.

Jeffrey Ayres, professor of political science and director of the CGE, said that Gadzekpo impressed him with his personable nature and extensive experience in international education.

"We had a very good sense that Phil would not only have the skill set to fulfill the responsibilities of the office, but he also would really be a great mentor to students, which is what we're all about in a small student-centered institution," Ayres said.

Gadzekpo quickly established a rapport with Ayres over their shared goals for international engagement. He said it was more like a conversation than a job interview.

"During my interview, we had a lot of things in common come up... we [Ayres and Gadzekpo] both

supported globalization, promoting our students to be global citizens, and also increasing internationalization at St. Mike's," Gadzekpo said.

Gadzekpo's primary objective is to sustain and support the international student population on campus. He works closely with Peggy Imai, director of study abroad, to encourage more international travel among the student body. He also works with Lisa Lagerquist, associate director of international admissions to increase international student numbers.

Gadzekpo's work with international students begins after they are admitted to the College. Enrollment and Marketing Vice President Kristin McAndrew explained the importance of his role at St. Michael's.

"He [Gadzekpo]... serves in a critical role as the College's Principal Designated School Official, which means he is our on-campus expert in immigration regulations," she said.

Gadzekpo provides guidance in the visa application process, which is a vital step for any international student before they can even enter the country. After helping international students retrieve their visas, he coordinates with a myriad of other services on campus to prepare for their arrival.

Gadzekpo said he teams up with a wide range of departments including counseling, CMAS [Center for Multicultural Affairs and Services], Bergeron Wellness Center, the Durick Library, dining services, the registrar, and financial services.

"So pretty much you know, almost all the departments on campus. I reach out to them and make sure that we can help our students feel comfortable and safe," Gadzekpo said.

Once students actually arrive in the country, Gadzekpo works to ensure a seamless transition. Francois Wemniga, an international graduate Fulbright scholar from Burkina Faso, said he was initially concerned about his arrival to the United States.

"One of my concerns was how I would do once at the airport, but my Director Phil made it easy for me. That day, I even arrived late but he was waiting for me, and even cooked for me because we could not find any open restaurant at that time," he said.



Phil Gadzekpo plans to provide his immigration regulation expertise to increase enrollment at St. Michael's.

## Gadzekpo leads effort to increase international student engagement

"My goal is just not for international students to come to St. Michael's and then leave their bubble and do some



# FEATURES



Phil Gadzekpo works in his office on Nov. 4, 2021.

Senegalese Fulbright Scholar Oumar Djigo said Gadzekpo's previous academic experience provides him with unique insights into the challenge international students face.

"As an international scholar himself, he is in a good position to have a bird's eye view of the actions that need to be taken to support international scholars and promote Saint Mike's at the international level," Djigo said. "He takes us shopping regularly despite his busy schedule and does his best to satisfy our needs."

Wemniga describes an almost familial relationship between Gadzekpo and his fellow scholars, all of whom live in the Townhouse 100s.

"What I really appreciate with our director as a neighbor is that he does not expect us to call him 'director.' He does not put distance between him and us," Wemniga said. "He considers us as his brothers and sisters. We sometimes have dinner together where he gives us advice on questions we have."

Jolivette Anderson-Douoning, an Edmundite Graduate Fellow and neighbor of Gadzekpo said his presence and role on campus will enhance the success of the community.

"I think what Phil does, simply by being a good, decent person combined with his academic research and his work at St. Michael's will open up the St. Mike's community to much success in the future," she said.

Ethan Li '22, an international student from China, first interacted with Gadzekpo over the summer via email, and was impressed by his accessibility. "He loves to help people out. We will send an email

to him and he will respond really quick. I think that's the kind of person who really loves his jobs," he said.

President Lorraine Sterritt expressed optimism for Gadzekpo's work in rebuilding an international presence at St. Michael's. "Phil has a very student-centered approach, and that is exactly what we need in this role. We are fortunate to have him at the helm of OISS!" Sterritt said.

Though Gadzekpo has made significant inroads among the international

student population, there remains a long journey ahead for him and Ayres to turn St. Michael's into the globally engaged institution they envision. The COVID-19 pandemic remains an ongoing impediment for international students entering the United States.

"After COVID, so many schools need to rebuild their international student population," Ayres said. "[There is] a sense that the United States isn't as welcoming to foreigners or international students, we've really seen a dramatic decline in international students."

Gadzekpo considers obstruction in the immigration system as a significant obstacle.

"We do our part, for admitted students, to make sure that they are the best fit for St. Michael's. However, we don't have control over whether or not they get a visa at the embassy," Gadzekpo said.

Though he may spend weeks preparing an international student for arrival, he has no guarantee they will even be allowed in the country.

"That's a huge challenge. You prepare your students, you're excited to see them, and the next day, they send you an email that they've been denied a visa, and you know, it's a bummer, but it's something that we can't control," Gadzekpo said.

A major emphasis of the OISS has been the cross-cultural diffusion the program can create. "As we grow our international student population, that can only help to promote global citizenship skills and a sense of intercultural engagement amongst existing domestic students," Ayres said.

Gadzekpo has considered implementing a mentor program for domestic students to guide international students through American culture. He believes both groups have a lot to learn from each other.

"My goal is just not for them to come in and increase our population, but at the same time, get to leave their bubble and do something that is not within the culture. That way, we can have two side effects," Gadzekpo said.

Shefali Misra, professor of political science, said that a robust international presence would be beneficial to her courses.

"As a teacher, it is so useful if I have two international students in my class, it seems to enhance the diversity of perspectives threefold," Misra said. "Simply by coming from a different place, they just have an outlook on things that is shaped by experiences."

Though Gadzekpo has a long road ahead for international student engagement at St. Michael's, he remains optimistic. He and Ayres are particularly excited for the International Student Lounge being renovated in St. Edmund's 120, which is expected to provide international students with a welcoming space to do work or relax.

Until then however, Gadzekpo's office is the heart of the OISS. His students can stop by almost any time of the day, whether they need help with immigration documents or just a friendly face to chat with. His door remains open, regardless if they have an appointment or not.

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PHOTOS BY LIAM GAY-KILLEEN

## to increase international ent at St. Michael's

inand increase our population, but at the same time, get  
thing that is not within the culture."



NOVEMBER 12, 2021

## NCAA name, image and likeness policy and what it means for the College

By Cassidy Koons  
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Student athletes at St. Michael's College now have the opportunity to receive endorsements and sponsorships based on the Name, Image and Likeness rule (NIL) from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA).

The NCAA announced as of July 1, that athletes can use their name and likeness for sponsorships and endorsements. In exchange for using their name and likeness, companies can now offer athletes merchandise and money. This does not mean that athletes will be paid for play. Pay for play means an athlete is directly paid for their athletic performance similar to professional athletes. With this rule, athletes are not paid for play but paid for the use of their name from an external company.

According to a statement from the NCAA website, "college athletes now have the opportunity to benefit from their name, image and likeness. All three divisions have adopted a uniform, interim policy suspending NCAA name, image and likeness rules for all incoming and current student-athletes in all sports."

For more than a decade, the NCAA has dealt with lawsuits from college students regarding the NIL rule. Starting in 2009 when a video game used the likeness of UCLA basketball player Ed O'Bannon without his permission, the cases have accumulated enough for the NCAA to now allow athletes to use their name, image, and likeness for their own benefit and protect them from such cases.

This NIL rule also states that colleges and universities are responsible for setting their own terms and guidelines, such as endorsement caps (how much money an athlete can receive) and restrictions on sponsorships. They only have this option if the state doesn't currently have laws restricting the NIL rule. Vermont currently has no laws restricting this new NIL rule so it will be up to the St. Michael's athletic department to set these guidelines.

Chris Kenny, senior associate director of athletics, said that as of right now, the "basic guidance is we

ask any student athlete here at St. Michael's who is interested in participating in an activity that would be falling under NIL guidance, to please let us know." However, he said the colleges guidelines will be very similar to the NCAA guidelines which remain vague and open for colleges discretion.

The current guidelines for the NIL rule were stated in an email from Kenny back in July. The email said, "It is permissible for Purple Knights student-athletes to benefit from the use of their name, image and likeness, as long as the compensation received is commensurate with market rates and does not violate any NCAA or Saint Michael's policy. Compensation can be in the form of cash, product, or receipt of other benefits." In addition, student-athletes are required to report any sponsorship deals to the athletic department.

"We are currently in the final stages of formalizing guidance with advice from the college's council," said Kenny, "Once that document is set, it will actually be available on our website for our student-athletes to access."

Eric Eaton, head coach of the St. Michael's Men's Basketball Team, thinks this is an important opportunity for student-athletes. "Finally, student athletes are getting a chance to get into this arena, why wouldn't you do it?"

Eaton said building your brand as an athlete is important in the same way it is important for students to get internships. Connecting academics and athletics through sponsorships could open even more opportunities. "I encourage every single athlete, if they can, to take advantage of this," Eaton said.

Will Meehan '22, on the St. Michael's Nordic Ski Team, is taking advantage of this change in rules. Meehan receives sponsorships from Barstool Sports, Dyeislife, Morning Brew, and Cannadips. Currently, there is no specific rule from the NCAA limiting students from entering deals with alcohol or tobacco companies; it is going to be up to each college once they finalize their own rules.

Meehan said he received t-shirts, a backpack from Morning Brew,



PHOTO BY ABBY KITTLER

Will Meehan poses with his Dyeislife Athlete shirt in the Saint Michael's ski room on Sunday, Nov. 7, 2021. The member of the Saint Michael's Nordic Ski Team is taking advantage of the new NCAA rule that student-athletes can now sign sponsorship deals.

and dice from Dyeislife. They are supposed to send him stuff every month. In exchange, he said "Most of the companies just want you to post [on Instagram] when you get something. If you send me a t-shirt or something, I'll absolutely put you on my story and tag you." However, he has not received any money from the sponsored companies, only merchandise. Although he has not reported this to the athletic department, Meehan said he was unsure if it was something he had to do.

Meehan contacted these companies himself, finding out about them through Twitter, online forms, emailing, and even being tagged in Instagram posts by his friends. Meehan also said he would recommend this to other student athletes. In his experience, he said "It's pretty easy, and kind of fun, [and] I get to say I'm sponsored." He said that it's easy for students to start getting involved even if all you get is a t-shirt out of it.

Another student athlete, Claire Williams '24, plays for the women's soccer team. She is sponsored by Top Bins Design and Apparel. This is a soccer apparel and equipment company. She found out about this company through an old soccer coach. "One of my old soccer coaches works for [Top Bins Design] and

was looking for ambassadors so he asked a few of my old teammates who play collegiately if they wanted to be part of it," she said.

Williams has reported her sponsorship to the athletic department, approved by Chris Kenny. Upon contacting Chris Kenny, she said, "He asked me questions about the company to make sure it compiled and he said I was all set."

She also recommends this to other student-athletes. "I personally have a bunch of free gear and it's a great opportunity to branch out and meet others who are sponsored," she said. Personal brand is important to student athletes and the NIL rule has given them networking opportunities as well.

The athletic department cannot be directly involved in sponsorships between companies and athletes as to not violate recruitment rules, but they aim to be as supportive as possible. In regards to the new NIL rule itself, Kenny said, "[It's a] really important step in the rights for student athletes." He said students need to contact the athletic department to assure that students are participating in permissible sponsorship and endorsement activities to avoid conflict between the college and companies.



# Fall season ends and winter begins



St. Michael's Josh Weiss '23 returns the ball to Ludovico Truffelli class of 2025 at St. Thomas Aquinas at the tennis courts on Oct. 24. St. Michael's lost 5-2.



PHOTOS BY LEX FOY

St. Michael's Christina Cummings '25 fights to keep the ball from Bentley's Rebecca Nguyen '22 at Duffy Field on Oct. 29. St. Michael's lost 1-0.

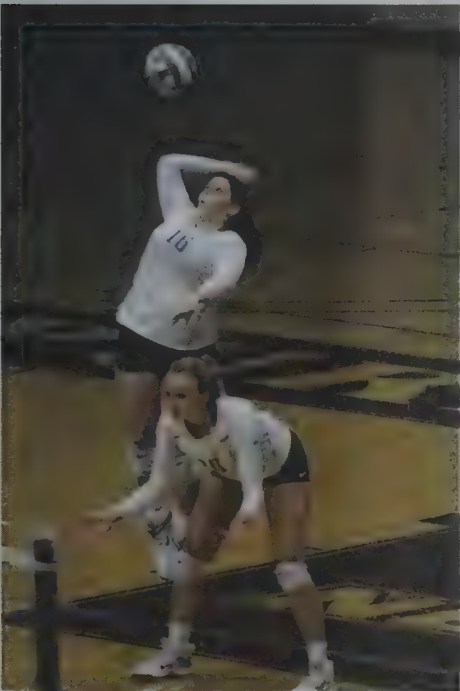


PHOTO BY LEX FOY



PHOTO BY JAMES BUCK/SMC ATHLETICS

**Left:** St. Michael's Jillian Orth '25 severs the ball to St. Rose at Ross Sports Center on Nov. 9. St. Michael's lost 3-0.  
**Right:** St. Michael's Chuma Oyigbo '25 shoots a free throw during an exhibition game against UVM at UVM on Oct. 30. St. Michael's lost 105-60.

Team	Overall	Conference
Field Hockey	5-13	4-10
Men's Soccer	7-9-1	3-8-1
Men's Swimming & Diving	2-1	0-1
Men's Tennis	1-1	0-0
Women's Ice Hockey	0-5	0-4
Women's Soccer	6-7-4	3-5-4
Women's Swimming & Diving	1-2	0-1
Women's Tennis	1-12	0-10
Women's Volleyball	1-13	0-10

Record as of Thursday, Nov. 11.



NOVEMBER 12, 2021

## St. Michael's theater returns to the stage

Department of Fine Arts announces one final performance of "Dancing at Lughnasa" after brief shutdown due to COVID spike

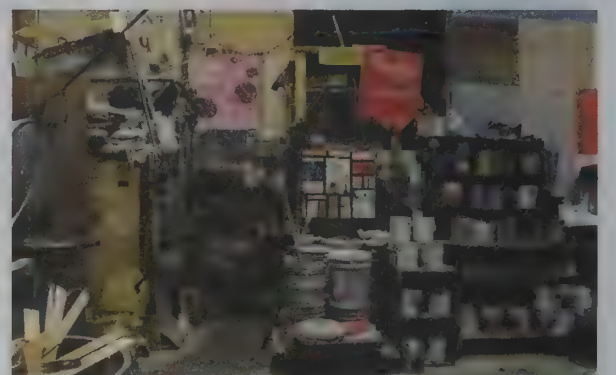
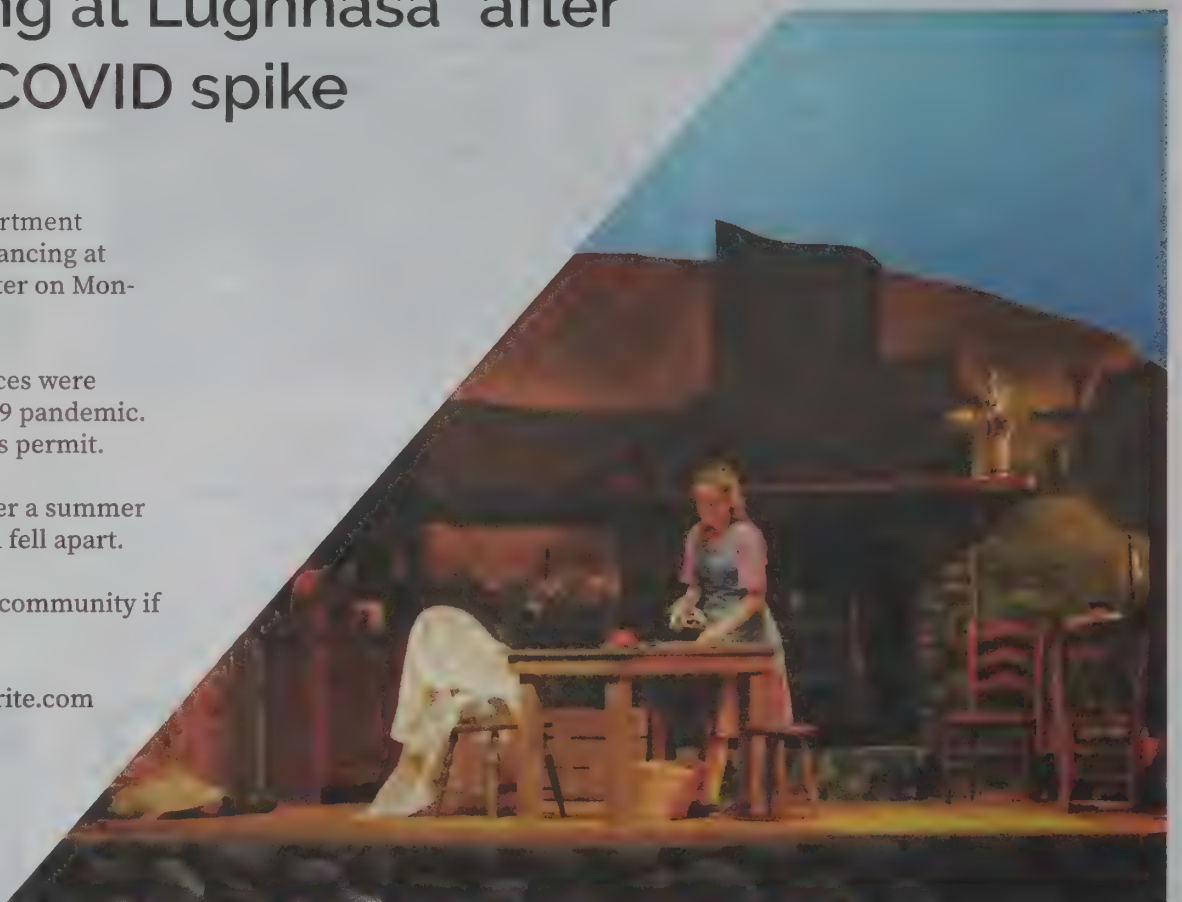
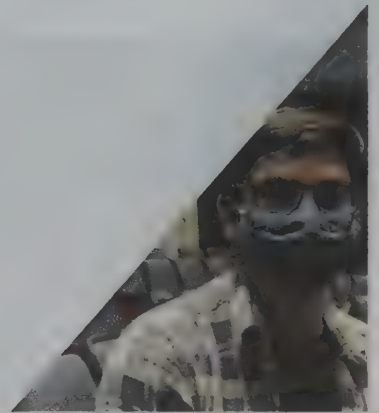
Returning for one night only, the Saint Michael's Department of Fine Arts plans to perform their production of "Dancing at Lughnasa" by Brian Friel in the McCarthy Arts center on Monday, November 15 at 7:00 pm.

After one performance on Nov. 3, all following performances were canceled due to health concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. However, one final showing is set to take place if conditions permit.

The performance follows the reflection of a young man after a summer trip to Ireland in 1936 - when his family came together, and fell apart.

Admission is free, and the doors are open to anyone in the community if conditions permit.

Reservations should be made at <http://dancingsmc.eventbrite.com>



PHOTOS BY MINQI KONG



NOVEMBER 12, 2021

defender.smcvt.edu

# Birds, bats and art

## Artists collaborate for McCarthy gallery show

Quinn Hukee

Staff Writer

qhukee@smcvt.edu

Everyone has seen a bat, but has anyone viewed a bat animation? The McCarthy Art Gallery is a space for exhibiting artist experimentation here on campus. The gallery recently hosted an opening featuring visiting artists Julia Hechtman and Melissa Pokorny on Oct. 28. The artists use photography and sculptures as a vessel to shine different perspectives on how we view objects and nature and their work will be on display through Dec. 10.

The gallery is a space for artists to travel from all over the country to showcase art pieces based on a common theme. This theme is shown throughout various different styles of art and collaborations between different artists.

For this year's theme, nature and humanity, Brian Collier, gallery curator and assistant professor of fine arts, invited Hechtman and Pokorny, who are both contemporary artists. Hechtman received her graduate degree at University of Illinois in Chicago and is a professor and deputy chair of the art and design department at Northeastern University. Hechtman brought in a vast display of ceramic death masks, photographic grid collections and animations that all symbolized a collective relationship when placed together.

Her work shared a space with fellow artist, Melissa Pokorny. Pokorny graduated and received her graduate degree from the University of California, Davis and is now a professor at the University of Illinois. The abstract form of her art was built from photograph conversions into flags and from multitudes of wires, hooks and sandbags which all tied her piece together metaphorically and literally.

"I think their show kind of embodies the, liberal arts, interdisciplinary mode of thinking and working," Collier said. "They're all over the place from conventional photography, like photographs that have beautiful scenes in nature, all the way to highly experimental forms of art based on sort of poetic interactions and relationships with material."

Their ideologies represent collaboration and investigation.

Their art is an investigation of dif-



PHOTO BY SAM PAPRIN

Melissa Pokorny, professor of painting and sculpture at the University of Illinois, shows her most recent work at a gallery opening in McCarthy Arts Center Thursday, Oct. 28.

ferent spaces and different places to resonate a representation of nature and humanity using both image and form.

The artist's presentations exhibit how nature and humanity are interpreted by humans.

"Not just nature as is, but how it changes as a result of human intervention. Not necessarily in a hands-on way, but thinking about it more in terms of a mental translation," Hechtman said. She depicted how nature is represented behind the idea of fragility and mortality. She especially finds keen interest in things that are beautiful and gross at the same time, along with ideas about the unbreakable bond between opposite forces of death and life.

Pokorny studies "threads of theoretical discourse," one of them which suggests a materialistic world or 'new materialism', referred to as post-human studies or post-humanities, in turn. It considers how the world is not just about human agency, but non-human agencies as well. "This could be a coyote, it could be a tree, it could be a coffee cup," Pokorny said.

She has also incorporated studies of 'anthropocene' into her work, the period in which human activity is the dominant influence on climate

and the environment. Environmental humanities and ecocriticism direct Pokorny's work and promote the thinking of concepts like deep time, quick versus long time and ideas about life spans. She delves into the differences between the lifespans of trees and humans. Pokorny uses her creative ability to create and build objects while incorporating her photographs into sculpting.

"I love the idea of being able to take a photograph of a femoral non-material thing and print it on a material like fabric or print it on paper and then mount that on aluminum, you know, it all becomes another building material for me," Pokorny said. "It opens me up to all sorts of possibilities."

Pokorny's work in McCarthy is made up of sculptures that compile layouts of fabric, wires, pictures and hooks. She ties in photographs she took that she printed onto fabric. She then drapes wires all across her image that are hanging onto the floor and places huge wire clumps at the base. She approached the gallery with no script, just the objects that she brought and created an original sculpture installation that was inspired by the McCarthy space.

Pokorny's work is unique and has a distinct similarity to Hechtman. Both artists find inspiration through

their experiences. They don't aim to tell a story, but rather evoke a kind of story telling view.

"If I have an experience and I present that experience to somebody else, will they have the same experience? Or will they have a different experience?" Hechtman said.

Both artists travel all over the world and visit places like Iceland. They photograph a vast array of landscapes and objects that have an abstract correlation with each other. Hechtman finds images with the same color palette and uses her ideas behind life and death, fragility and morality to orchestrate her overall ideas and plans.

"A lot of dead birds," Hechtman said. "Yes. A lot of dead birds. I think they're like the most beautiful objects. But I mean, I know that there are also some people who would find them kind of repulsive, but I really think that they're so elegant and spectacular looking."

The McCarthy Art Gallery gave Hechtman and Pokorny the freedom to express their artwork through multiple mediums by taking something that's not represented as what it is, but transforming it into what it can become. Visiting hours are 10-5, Monday through Friday.



# DEFENDER EDITORIAL

NOVEMBER 12, 2021

The recent surge in COVID-19 cases on campus has rattled our community and heightened feelings of anxiety, uncertainty and distress.

The effort to reduce COVID-19 spread on campus requires an "all hands on deck" approach from each member of our community. Whether it be to coordinate volunteer efforts and deliver meals, greet a friend in isolation from outside their window or educate peers on health and safety updates from the administration, everyone has a part to play.

The first step to aid efforts that reduce viral spread is to wear a mask in all indoor spaces as advised by the EPG. We must also resist the urge to partake in unsupervised parties and in-person student social gatherings through Thanksgiving break. Party registration has been suspended, and it is important that we respect these guidelines even if we don't want to.

As you walk through campus and read health and safety updates, it's important to keep in mind the work of staff members who are at the forefront of COVID-19 response efforts in our community. Since the outbreak began nearly two years ago, staff members have spearheaded efforts to conduct testing and support students with COVID-19. Some even have young children at home.

Each outbreak our community endured reinforces the importance of following protocols. Don't be complacent or downplay the infectious capabilities of COVID-19. As frustrating as it may seem, we can't undo the situation we are currently in, and we all have a part to play in this community.

-Sam Heyliger

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**Mission Statement:** We, the voice of St. Michael's College, strive to create high quality journalism collected on a foundation of integrity. We represent the pulse of our campus by facilitating a forum for informative, enlightening and thought-provoking conversation. Through in-depth reporting, accurate storytelling and exceptional visuals, The Defender aims to professionally and ethically deliver the truth to our diverse audience.



## LEONARDO'S BASICS

### SAUCE & CHEESE PIZZA

#### SAUCES

Zesty Tomato  
Olive Oil Garlic  
Pesto Pine Nut  
Thai Peanut  
Barbecue

#### CRUSTS

White  
Certified Organic Wheat  
MED ADD .60 LG ADD .85  
Gluten Free  
MED ONLY ADD \$3.75

## PIZZA TOPPINGS

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Hot Sausage  
Ground Beef  
Bacon  
Chicken  
Ham  
Anchovies  
Beyond Burger\* MED ADD \$1.35 LG ADD \$1.85  
Tomatoes  
Broccoli  
Mushrooms  
Spinach  
Red Onions  
Shredded Potatoes  
Green Peppers

Sun Dried Tomatoes  
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Pepperoni\* Peppers  
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Artichokes  
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#### BASIL PESTO CHICKEN

Basil Pesto Nut Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Chicken, Roasted Red Peppers, Sun Dried Tomatoes, Red Onions, Gorgonzola Cheese

#### BARELY BELIEVABLE

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#### FENNEL SAUSAGE GOURMET

Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Hot Sausage, Fennel, Red Onions, Spinach, Gorgonzola Cheese

#### GOAT CHEESE HONEY PIE

Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Mushrooms, Red Onions, Thyme, Goat Cheese, Honey

#### GORGONZOLA GOURMET

Olive Oil Garlic, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Spinach, Tomatoes, Artichokes, Gorgonzola Cheese

#### HAWAIIAN ISLAND DELIGHT

Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Ham, Bacon, Broccoli, Pineapple

#### HOT HONEY BLISS

Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Pepperoni, Red Onions, Oregon, Jalapenos, Hot Honey

#### MEAT LOVER'S REVENGE

Tomato Sauce, Cheddar/Mozzarella Cheese, Pepperoni, Hot Sausage, Ground Beef, Ham

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#### SIX FEET UNDER

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MED \$11.50  
LG \$16.60

MED \$1.70  
LG \$2.00

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#### WORKS

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# Letters to the editor

Students are being thrown under the bus for the recent COVID outbreak. Parties had been happening all year. Rules allowed for 40 people inside the townhouses and no mask requirements. Additionally, there was no mention by the administration of the 400+ person Friday Knight Dry since it was a school-sponsored activity. There was minimal effort made to

mass test the student body or to conduct classes virtually for the week. Closing the campus off to all student guests and suspending student social gatherings, yet still hosting a prospective student open house this weekend shows where the school's priorities lie.

Sincerely,  
Will Meehan '22

Each year, the Student Global AIDS Campaign plans programming and events during the week of World AIDS Day (December 1). The main goals of these events are 1. show our support for those who live with HIV/AIDS worldwide, 2. increase awareness about HIV/AIDS in the St. Mike's community, and 3. demand more funding to support people living with HIV/AIDS from the United States government. Our theme for this year is global

health equity and access to vaccines, and we invite both the Defender and the Saint Michael's College community to join in the events we will hold between December 1 and 3, and help us support and amplify the voices of people living with HIV/AIDS worldwide. Please watch for more information in the coming weeks.

Sincerely,  
Members of the Student Global AIDS Campaign

Get ahead, catch up, or stay on track this winter.

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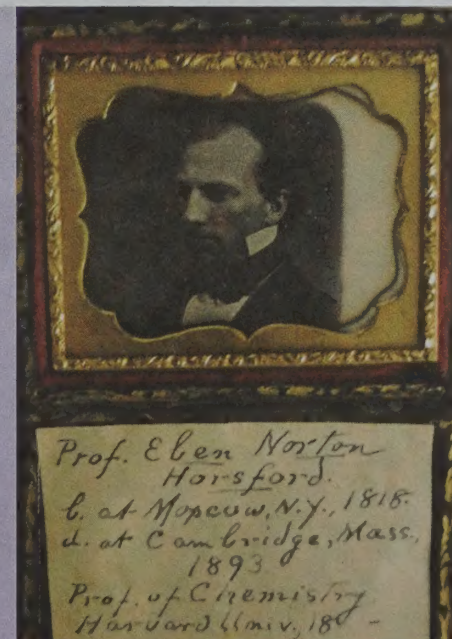
The Horsford Project is seeking a research assistant for the Spring Semester. Approximately four – six hours per week, assisting adjunct psychology instructor Joseph Covais with research into the life of Eben Horsford, one of America's first photographers.

Typical tasks would include helping to transcribe original 19th Century handwritten documents such as letters, diaries, and professional papers dealing with:

- \*Photography,
- \*Phrenology,
- \*Early women's education,
- \*Animal magnetism,

and associated subjects of 19th century esoterica.

Reliability and attention to detail a must – interest in history desirable. Contact Mr. Covais at [jcovais@smcvt.edu](mailto:jcovais@smcvt.edu) – 654 2984 – or stop by Rm. 334 in the library for further details!





# DEFENDER VOICES

NOVEMBER 12, 2021

## Things never go as planned

By Alexander Foy

Sports & Opinion Editor  
afoy@mail.smcvt.edu

When I packed for college, my plan was to bring my books and leave my work-out gear but after a few days on campus I bumped into Bhuttu Mathews, the coach of the rugby team, and those plans changed.

I accepted Mathews' invitation to attend an information session about the club. At the meeting, the coaches and team emphasised the brotherhood that encompasses rugby and the team at St. Michael's. This was appealing to me since that was one of the main reasons that I enjoyed wrestling.

After the meeting, I was hooked. I started to fill out the forms so I could play. The upperclassmen on the team walked me through the process and offered to answer any questions I had about the forms. This support was invaluable as I was already bogged down with school work.

If I never took a step into the unknown, I wouldn't have found this bond that eased my transition to college.

"What happens outside of the classroom is such an opportunity for students to continue to learn about oneself, how to interact with those around them and also how to hone in on personal passions and interests," said Dawn Ellinwood, vice president for student affairs.

After I filled out my forms and purchased the necessary equipment, it was time for my first practice. I was nervous about going, since I knew nothing about the sport. To my surprise, I wasn't the only one who felt outside of their comfort zone. A few upperclassmen confessed that they didn't understand the game completely until their second season.

My team members explained the rules and encouraged me that the game will make more sense with time. This continual support made me feel welcomed, and cemented my newfound sense of belonging here. I started to view practice as a chance to escape class and learn rugby instead of feeling embarrassed for not knowing as much as the other players.

I was invited to the pregame ritual of pasta dinner night and spent time



PHOTOS BY ROB CATTANACH

**Top:** Members of the rugby team poses for a picture after the last game of the season.  
**Bottom:** Members of the rugby team warming up before the last game of the season

with my teammates outside of rugby. After the dinner I felt more connected and less like an outsider.

My first game action was towards the end of our first match. I was still unsure of how to play my position, but my teammates helped me figure it out.

The coaching staff asked about my experience playing for the first time. Despite my short time playing, I explained how much I enjoyed it and couldn't wait to play again. I was glad the coaches showed interest in my experience.

As I attended practices and spent more time with the team, I learned that some of our players were involved in other campus organizations. Some of them reached out and offered to help me get involved. Without realizing it, I became a member of the rugby brotherhood.

As the season came to an end, the team conducted a naming ritual



where each new player was given a nickname. After receiving a new name, we were assigned an upperclassman to be our "big brother." With that, we became a part of the rugby brotherhood.

Looking back on my experience on the rugby team I can not help but laugh. If I stuck to my initial plan, I would have never formed the

friendships I did. I am glad that I deviated from that plan and am looking forward to continuing rugby throughout my college career.

So, how will you scrap your plans and walk outside your comfort zone?